elimination of apartheid, democratisation of the UN and other issues, with a view to promoting the political and economic interests of its members.

2749. [*Withdrawn*]

Deliberations at the Indo-Srilanka Joint Commission Meeting

2750. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:
SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indo-Srilankan Joint Commission held its first meeting in New Delhi, commencing from January 2, 1992;

(b) if so, whether any settlement of Tamil problem in Srilanka was thrashed out at the meeting; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what other issues were discussed at the meeting and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir. The first session of the Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Commission was held in New Delhi from 5th to 7th January, 1992.

(b) and (c) The Joint Commission aims at promoting bilateral relations in economic, commercial, industrial, science & technology, cultural and other fields. The Joint Commission reviewed the work of its two Sub-Commission on Trade, Investment and Finance and on Cultural, Social and Educational matters which had met in Colombo in October 1991 and gave directions for their future work. The two sides also agreed to set up a third Sub-Commission on Science and Technology in order to give impetus to cooperation in this sector between the Governments and the scientific communities in the two countries. The occasion of the visit of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister also provided an opportunity to also discuss the ethnic situation in Sri Lanka. Both sides agreed that only a negotiated political settlement within the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka would bring a lasting solution to the ethnic problem. We reiterated that the political framework created by the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution following the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement remains a constructive point of reference for any future negotiations.

Representation of Jain Community on the World Body (UNO)

2751. KUMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the International Mahavir Jain Mission has been approved for association with the United Nations;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the procedure laid down for selection of its representatives on this body?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) and (b) The International Mahavir Jain Mission has been accorded the status of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). The application of this NGO was approved by an internal DPI committee on NGOs on 28.1.92.

(c) The International Mahavir Jain Mission is free to nominate its own representatives to participate in the NGO activities of D.P.I.

Russia-Pakistan Joint Communique on Kashmir

2752. SHRI SHABBIR AHMAD SALARIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Russia in a Joint Communique with Pakistan in December, 1991 has stated that it favours resolution of Kashmir dispute with Pakistan according to International agreement; and

(b) If so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir. At the end of the visit of Vice-President of Russian Federation, Alexander V. Rutskoi to Pakistan, in the Joint Communique issued in Islamabad on 22 December, 91 the Russian side is stated to have

expressed the hope that the Kashmir issue would be resolved peacefully through negotiations between Pakistan and India on the basis of international agreements.

(b) The Russian Federation have since conveyed to Government that their position on Kashmir remains the same as that of the former USSR.

Influx of Bhutani Refugees in Darjeeling

2753. SHRI RATNABAHADUR RAI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the influx of refugees from Bhutan to Doars area of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal since the last two years; and

(b) if so, what are the details of steps being taken for the supply of necessary relief to them?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir. Government are aware of the influx of persons from Bhutan to the Doars area of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal.

(b) Most of these persons are staying with their friends and relatives in the tea gardens/adjoining areas of Jalpaiguri district. Government are not comtemplating the supply of relief to them.

Iranian offer for resolving India Pakistan issues

2754. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Iranian Ambassador to India had offered the good offices of his country to mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir question;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) whether the Iranian Government have taken any initiative in this regard and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) to (c) Government are aware of some reports in this regard, During bilateral exchanges at various levels, there have been some suggestions from Iranian leaders and officials that Iran was willing to assist with the resolution of India's problems with Pakistan, should this offer be of interest to India. Government have reiterated their cosistent position that all differences with Pakistan are to be resolved bilaterally under the Simla Agreement and there can be no scope for outside or third party involvement of any sort.

New Maritime Strategy Cooperation Plan

2755. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has in the context of the new international equations evolved any Maritime Strategy Co-operation Plan with the Indian Ocean Littoral States with a view to promote national interests;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what is India's present thinking on this crucial issue?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) to (c) Due to their diversity of perceptions and interests a common maritime strategy or plan amongst the littoral states is not feasible at present. However, government are alive to developments which could affect our maritime and other interests, and, to this and, support cooperative efforts with interested countries in the area.

Compensation to refugees from Bangladesh

2756. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India have been pursuing the question of settlement of compensation to refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) with its counterpart in Bangladesh;

(b) if so, what is the progress made in the matter; and

(c) whether the present Government of